

HESTER,

- K Esther

HESTER

POEM.



LONDON:

Printed for H. CLEMENTS, at the *Half-Moon*,
in St. *Pauls-Church-yard*. MDCCXIV.

HESTER

A

P O F M.



L O N D O N

Printed for H. Clements, at the Half-Moon,
in St. Paul's Church-yard, MDCCXIV.



HESTER,

POEM.

BOOK I.



AY, Muse, what Pow'r Unseen does

Vertue guide,

How near the King and Captive

are ally'd;

How Envy by concealing, Worth displays,

And Malice is the Means the Good to raise:

Whence Weakness arms with Victory the Just,

And guilty Might is in Assurance lost.

B

THOU

HESTER: A POEM.

THOU who art all Omnipotence above,
Mysterious Wisdom, and stupendous Love,

Who cloath'd with Flesh, didst deign for Man to (die,
To save a Rebel World from Death's Eternity,
Direct the wandring Raptures of my Muse,
To sing a Race, Thy Birth and Mercy chose.

BENEATH the Cedars of a Rural Seat
The Fav'rite *Haman* pass'd the Noon-tide Heat;
A gentle Silence calms around the Place,
And woo's to Rest with flatt'ring Looks of Peace;
No Noise, but such as whisp'ring Poplars make,
That fearful seem their slumbring Lord to wake;
A gloomy Negligence of Day above,
Improves the Shade, and consecrates the Grove.
Not so unhappy He beguiles his Fears,
Nor sleeps he unremembring of his Cares:
Oft wou'd he still the Tumults of his Breast,
Curb the wild Thoughts, and sooth 'em into Rest;

The

HESTER: A POEM

The painted Hopes of what he fancies Great
Pursue him in his Dreams, and trouble his Retreat.
Awhile he shrinks, as if surpris'd by Death,
Chill'd with the Thought, and provident of Breath;
He shuns the dreary Passage to the Realms beneath:
Then, waking, from the Grasp of Fate repriev'd.
He thanks the Gods to find himself deceiv'd.
A while his Brow a secret Joy betrays,
And Satisfaction sparkles in his Face;
'Till rais'd with eager Appetite of Bliss,
He finds but naked Truth, and plain Realities.
The visionary Scene returns to Air,
And Frowns in Place of vanish'd Smiles appear.

Now fix'd he lies, as if retir'd from Light
To more than wonted Slumbers of the Night,
(Whether alone by Nature's Art contriv'd,
Or from above the drowsy Charm's deriv'd)

When, lo, from Depths of Darkness and De-
(spair,
The Fiend *Ambition* mounts to upper Air.

Quicker than Light he cleaves the yielding Skies,

And now on Earth the stalks, (and now thro' Air
(the flies ;

To *Sufa's* Court the nimble Phantom hafts,

And as she passes on unseen, she blasts,

By *Haman's* Side, in human Likeness clad,

With Voice, and Stature of his Sire long dead,

She lights, and knowing of infernal Wiles, thus said:

" UNWORTHY my Paternal Care, sleep on,

" 'Till Fortune courts thy Leisure to be won ;

“ Or was it this thy partial Father meant,

“ When first he chose Thee rude and innocent ;

" Preferr'd the darling Boy to Claim of Years.

“ And made Thee more than Sharer of my Pray’rs:

“Betimes inform'd Thy Soul for noblest Fate,

“ And taught Thee all the Mysteries of State,

“ To lavish thus a fruitless Age at Court,

"Inglorious, and each easy Rival's Sport?"

To

" To wait secure th' Occasions you should make,

" When Pow'r and Godlike Greatness are at
(Stake ?

" Does thus the formidable Courtier move ;

" The promis'd Guardian of his Prince's Love,

" The towering Shrub that shou'd alarm the
(Palms above?)

" Not so thy Sire, thro' Indigence of Mind,

" The rugged Paths of leading Fame declin'd.

" My Hopes unequal, my Pretension less,

" I scorn'd the servile Croud, and seiz'd Success.

" 'Twas but a bold Attempt, approv'd by Fate,

" My narrow Lot extended to be great :

" 'Tis to this Origin that Princes owe

" Empire Supreme, and Lord it here below.

" Ev'n *Baal* himself who Rules amidst the Gods,

" And sways an Universe with awful Nods,

" By human Excellence, and Grandeur here,

" Usurp'd the Clouds, and claim'd the Thunder
(there.

" But what can all th' Examples of the Dead,

" Or a fond Father's restless Ashes plead,

" To one grown indolent, all wrapt in Ease,
 " Deaf to the Calls of offer'd Happiness;
 " Whom condescending Stars have fondly woo'd,
 " While Toil and Tears of Thousands they with-
 " (stood.
 " I saw (even yet it moves me to recal
 " The hated Thought) I saw thee then, when all
 " With Hopes or Fears the fatal Story heard,
 " And Care on ev'ry Brow but Thine appear'd;
 " When *Vulsti*, fond of Disobedience grown,
 " Preferr'd a Female Passion to a Crown;
 " When banish'd *Susa*, and her Lord's Embrace,
 " She quitted Royal Grandeur in Disgrace;
 " When forc'd to feel a King and Husband's Sway,
 " She taught the Duty she refus'd to pay;
 " And now the King, by crafty Counsel led,
 " Confers the vacant Honour of his Bed;
 " The fickle Choice while Fancy guides alone,
 " And Beauty gives a Title to the Throne:
 " Each meanest Minister reviews his Plot,
 " And forms his Use of what the Heav'ns allot:

“ But

HESTER: A POEM.

7

- " But wiler *Haman*, while the Court contends,
" And busie States-men subtly weave their Ends,
" With cold Indifference beholds their Toil,
" On easy Terms contented to lie still.
" Yet, tho' thy Soul can Half of Thee disdain,
" (For Glory works the Being up to Man)
" At least, as Mine, a filial Duty pay ;
" And All-commanding *Love* in me Obey."

SHE spake ; and strait unseen repeats her Flight,
As *Meteors* languishing forsake the Sight.

No longer could the struggling *Haman* bear
The big Surprize, or rule th' unweildy Care ;
Th' embodied Air his vain Embraces try,
That mocks his Arms, and glides impassive by.
Aloud he calls the fleeting Shade to stay,
Much uttering, and eager much to say ;
Starts trembling, and his mossy Bed forsakes,
And in the Fury of the Chase awakes.

Still the known Features play before his Eyes,

And every Wind repeats his Father's Voice.

Already on his Soul the Poyson gains

Insidious, and o'er his Reason reigns.

Already wing'd his Wishes upward soar,

Nor brook the scanty Flight they fear'd before.

So, if in sultry Climes, the Brakes among,

Some Shepherd by the painted Asp be stung;

The small Assassin rolls unseen away,

Nor does the pungent Pain the Wound betray:

Yet thro' the Purple Mass remorseless Fate

In Ambush steals, and dead the Pulses bear;

Mixt with the curdling Stream the Poysons go,

And Life and Death in the same Channel flow;

The Frantic wretch in pleasing Anguish lies,

And in a Dream of Satisfaction dies.

WHILE Haman's Thoughts attend the Vision
(past,

And various Apprehensions crowd his Breast,

From

HESTER: A POEM.

9

From Court a Messenger demands his Ear,
And *Assuerus* wills his Presence there:
He bows; and hastens joyful to appear.

AMBITION, Bane of States, false Greatness first
Conceiv'd the Brat, in her own Offspring curst.
Forgetful of her Birth, she tow'rs on high,
And claims a Right to Pow'r and Dignity.
Like Envy venomous, and, as her Snakes,
She shares herself the Pestilence she makes:
False Opticks guide her Intellects o'ercast,
Enlarge the coming Honours, dwindle Glories past.
Still with some absent Circumstance she's cross'd,
And all Enjoyment's in Expectance lost.
Still rising Prospects open to her View;
One Heaven attain'd discovers but a new.

NEAR *Susa's* Entrance from the Rise of Day,
Where am'rous Streams in bubbling Murmurs play,
A sumptuous Pile confesses Ancient Date,
Immensely Beautiful, and justly Great:

Grac'd

Grac'd with its Kings thro' long recorded reigns,
The Seat an Angust Air of Majesty retains.

HERE *Assuerus* chooses his Abode,
To rule his Eastern World, almost a God.
Here envious Courtiers importune the Stars
With partial Pray'rs, and wage Domestick Wars:
With fawning Diligence deceive their Lord,
While Faction shares the Purple and the Sword.
With Patience one expects his Turn of Chance,
And blames his Fellow's Art of Impudence:
Another more securely lays his Plot,
And steals Preferment with a Rival's Vote.
This begs a Province, That a City wants;
A Third, grown weary of his Care, repents.
Young *Dorax* for a Legion makes Address,
Till taught the Mystery of Promises:
And baffled *Artabanus* finds too late,
He Fee'd his En'my for his Advocate.
Vain Hopes, the Face of Friendship and of Peace,
Amuse the Crowd, and sanctify the Place.

So from the Beach the Marble Ocean's seen,
 A glittering, fair expanse, and polish'd Plain;
 Its faithless Womb a smiling Surface hides,
 The Weeds it washes, and the Mounds it chides,
 And o're the silver Shells relapsing glides.
 But when th' alluring Main the Keel commands,
 We meet with angry Storms, and sinking Sands;
 Must ply the Rudder, at the Cable Sweat,
 And from the rigid Rocks receive our Fate.
 The lab'ring Deep in Pangs convulsive roars,
 Here shews a vast Abyss, and there in Mountains
 (loars.

AND now to Court hafts Haman, big with Pride,
 To share his Prince's Breast, and Council guide.
 The Master calls him, and He chearful goes,
 While Lust of Rule the Work of Duty does.
 Amidst the Rival Potentates he stands,
 And while he seems obsequious, all commands.

OLD *Meres*, void of Prejudice or Art,
 Speaks in his Look the Language of his Heart.
 True to himself, he's obstinately good,
 And scorns the base Compliance of the Crowd.
 No Smiles or Frowns can byass his Advice,
 For what's the Publick Interest is His.

NEXT *Tharbish*, vainly fond of Ignorance,
 In borrow'd Wit proclaims his Want of Sense.
 Wife Wealth each Vacancy of Soul supplies,
 And in a Waste of Sounds th' Idea dies.

WITH eager Eloquence *Marsena's* short,
 And storms his Audience he design'd to court.
 Bred in the Field, he moves absurdly here,
 Untaught the Courtier's Arts, and wordy War.
 Wild Warmth mistakes the Nature of the Fight,
 Prevents it self, and stumbles on the Right.

SOFT *Admatha*, What Faction has not known,
 By Turns of all Opinions but his own?

Averse

HESTER: A POEM.

113

Averse to Toil he makes his Ease his Guide,
Thinks Reason Scruples, Constancy but Pride;
Still hears, still changes, is still satisfy'd.

VARIOUS as he, but to his Int'rest true,
Memucan with the Seasons changes too.
In a feign'd Frankness he conceals his Heart,
And his kind Words still take the Hearer's Part.
Each Party's secret Friend, and secret Foe;
His dark Designs from such Confusion grow.

Mov'd at the faithless Age, and fowr'd with Pain,
Old *Carshena* rails on, but rails in vain.
Bold, shocking Truths, and out of Time will teach,
Has every Vertue, and offends with each.

HERE *Shethar's* Front, and pregnant Aspect win
Th' unwary Sight, and Wonders boast within;
Till Speech impolitick the Secret tells,
How mean a Soul beneath the Surface dwells.

The

The budding Lawrels from his Brow are torn,
And Veneration vanishes in Scorn.

THERE false Appearance does again address,
With equal Fraud, but different Success:
Unpromis'd Sprightliness surprizes more
Than all collected Elegance before.

SUCH *Hamax* was, new Minion of the State,
And thus improv'd the kind Consent of Fate.

“ What bashful Modesty, and erring Fear,
“ A Princely Throng, and *Asia's* Master here,
“ Had doom'd to Silence, in a fond Mistake
“ Of Loyalty, Obedience bids me speak,
“ And thou, O King, tho' Partner of the Skies,
“ Tho' wide as *Heav'n* thy boundless Empire lies,
“ Behold thy Rival Gods condemn not Sacrifice.
“ May some blest Nymph, of softest Charms possess'd,
“ Like *Iris* fair, and like *Anaxa* chaste,

“ Whom

HESTER: A POEM. 15

" Whom Royal Choice shall happily approve
" Amidst the fairest Objects of his Love,
" Vain *Vashti's* hated Memory deface,
" And crown her Monarch with a Queen's Em-
(brace.

" Then bid the blushing Candidates approach,
" Whome'er kind Nature form'd with softer Touch.
" Nor need Imperial Dignity disdain
" To let a Subject Beauty share his Reign,
" Born to command, and disobey'd in vain.

A SUDDEN Smile o'erspread the Prince's Look,
And own'd a Satisfaction as he spoke.
No Courtier did a rude Objection raise,
But the same Smile was ready on each Face.
What Wretch was e'er so hardy to oppose
Successful Vice, or losing Vertue chose?
Of Good or Bad Success the Title gives,
The poor Man's worthless, and he's brave that
(thrives.

HERE

HERE *Assuerus*, rising from his Seat,
 Bespake the Council bowing at his Feet;

"To find the Fair, my Lords, on you shall lie;

"Go summon all may charm a Monarch's Eye:

"What *Haman* wisely has advis'd, pursue,

"For so the Will of Heaven directs to do.

He paus'd; and *Haman* with the Rest withdrew.

AND now her hundred Mouths the Goddess
 (swells,

'And thro' the Realm the Resolution tells.

Peers, Chamberlains, and Eunuchs all attend,

And each pretending Beauty makes her Friend.

With small Address the willing Fair are won,

When Kings are Suitors, and the Bait a Throne.

Flush'd with Conceit the Fair themselves review,

See double all their Charms, and dream of new.

With practic'd Countenance, and Smile of Art,

The fancied Queens already share his Heart.

Thus

HESTER: A POEM. 17

Thus deck'd, and *Venus* call'd, no Time they lose

To haste where *Haggi* does his Care dispose.

A thousand blooming Forms his Orders wait,

With longing Visions of approaching State.

So the feign'd Three their Charms on *Ida* vie,

Pain fills their Heart, and Prejudice their Eye.

Whate'er rude Judgment fancies wanting there,

'Tis Envy, and she's more than Goddess here.

Still Self in moving Shape of Bribe appears,

And Hope breaks brightning thro' the Mist of Fears.

When *Juda* had incurr'd th' *Almighty's* Hate,

Unmov'd by Miracles, and *Israel's* Fate;

When Mercy but improv'd the guilty Score,

And Justice blush'd to own the Sinners more;

When Fam'd *Jerusalem* was Conquest made,

By Rebel Sins to *Babylon* betray'd:

Amidst the stern Calamities of War,

(The Scourge of Heav'n to Punish Nations here)

C

O L D

OLD Kish, a Branch of Benjamin, repriev'd
From milder Death, his Liberty out-liv'd.
Hence Mordecai, the Third Descendant, springs,
When Life no Blessing but a Burden brings :
Yet, fix'd on Heav'n his Thoughts, he calmly sees
A foreign Soil, and Banishment can bless.
With Arms of Patience he subdues all Foes ;
Such early Courage Innocence bestows.
The Patriarchal Blood with manly Grace,
His high Descent distinguish'd in his Face.
An easy Carriage, and engaging Look,
Confess'd his Mind, and Favour first bespoke.
For, form'd by Nature to be truly Great,
The Beauties of his Soul were more compleat.
Firm to the Choice his Reason once advis'd,
His Policy was simple, undisguis'd.
Plain Honesty the leading Maxim stood,
And bid each dubious Scene of Life be good.

Discreetly

HESTER: A POEM.

19

Discreetly Bold, compassionately Just;
 Most Master where he found Temptation most.
 So well he knew the Weaknesses within,
 Each languid Vertue, each prevailing Sin,
 So wisely govern'd with a decent Care,
 That he alone was conscious what they were.
 His Words were few, but natural and full,
 And elegantly plain express'd his Soul.
 So Heaven he constantly Address'd in Pray'r,
 For scatter'd *Israel's* Return from far,
 With distant Hopes of *Shilo* to appear.
 To Friendship such a Reverence he bore,
 That but his Loyalty alone was more:
 And those, whom Enmity his Love debar'd,
 A winning Pity, and Forgiveness shar'd.
 Such *Mordecai*, when, unappriz'd of Fear,
 He took the Orphan *Hester* to his Care;
 Till Rage of Victory shou'd weary'd cease,
 And bought Her safety at the Price of His.

Collat'ral Love all Blandishments supply'd,
And found a Father, Nature had deny'd.
As yet with Heav'nly Warmth Mankind was blest,
And oft Affection fill'd a Stranger's Breast.
Nor less his Piety in after Years
Inform'd the Fair, and made His Vertues Hers.
He taught her first the Sweets of holy Love,
The Duties here that lead to Bliss above:
Her Maker's Rites, his Altars, and his Praise;
And what the Law of Fellow-Mortals is:
Next all the Benefits of Art he shews,
That Wit contrives, and Decency allows;
Alone a Fortune for a common Fair,
Tho' lost in greater Excellencies here.
Thus join'd the Blessings either Sex partake,
The Force of Man in Woman's softer Make.
What Victories the fatal Charmer wait,
When Wiles and Pow'r, of Wit and Beauty meet

Wit

With Both the Fair *Hadassa's* Arms were blest;
Her Conquests the divided World confess'd,
In Love one half, in Jealousy the Rest.

Than Peace more Innocent, than Turtles Chast,
Her Blushes such as Paint the Morning East.

Soft as a *Cherub* when he parts the Skies,
Or fancy'd Forms of Idol Deities.

Here Fame's Extravagance is only true,
And Nature's Jealous of the Piece she drew.

By shifting Empire led, in *Susa's* Gates

Now *Mordecai* a rising Courtier waits.

Not long Captivity detain'd him there,

For Vertue is a Passport every where.

Pleas'd with the chearful Freedom of a Mind

Thro' all Vicissitudes of Woe resign'd,

The gen'rous Slave soon captivates his Lord,

And Liberty's but Earnest of Reward.

Gladly he listens while his Guest imparts

His Country Rites, their History, their Arts:

Asks of the Jewish Chiefs, the fatal Fight,
And Israel's Doom, almost a Proselyte.

AND now a new Relation does begin,
On equal Terms of Amity they join.
To Court his Fav'rite Jew the Chaldee leads,
And finds him all the Novel-Statesman needs.
The bashful Meekness of his Friend he chides,
And what he shares of Royal Smiles divides.
A Courtier's Fame thus Mordecai derives,
And shews how Merit most when humble thrives.
How Providence o'er Human causes Reigns;
How distant Means of Happiness Ordains,
And leads the nearest Way to Crowns, by Chains.

TwAS so, when Widow'd Majesty wou'd choose
A Beauty worthy of a Monarch's Spouse:
Compell'd by Importunity of Friends,
Young Hester too to Susa's Palace tends.
With Joy Old Haggi view'd the lovely Maid,
And wish'd a Thousand Blessings on her Head:

With

HESTER: A POEM

29

With partial Favour reverenc'd her Race,
And Read a Queen thus early in her Face.
She in a Calm of Patience waits the Day,
While Resignation's all her Policy.

So the *Bethulian* Matron fearless went
Thro' hostile Armies to the fatal Tent.
Her Pious Arms were Abstinence and Pray'r,
And Heav'n and Innocence had banish'd Fear.
The strength of Faith's superior Pow'r she knew,
For he that will'd the Deed wou'd aid her too.

BOOK II.





HESTER, A POEM.

BOOK II.

***** WAS infant Dawn, and just the kind-
ling Sky
***** T Began to redden with *Aurora's* Dye ;
***** Their dewy Tears the blubber'd Roses cease,
And Hyacinths expand their purple Dress ;
Sad *Philomel* salutes the rising Rays,
And wakes the Woods with her sweet *Matin* Lays.
And now the Seasons *Perſian* Rites require
To purify the future Spouſe expire ;

Six various Meems in Oils of fragrant Scent,
As many in *Arabian* Odours, spent with him and

FULL of his Charge Old *Haggi* doz'd the Night,
And Thoughts of Dury wake him with the Light,
Much in his Mind revolving of the Fair,
But most the Fate of *Hester* was his Care.

The Nymphs, in Raptures of Expectance, long
Prevent the warbling Call, and *Progne's* Song.

The lagging Time, for want of Wings, they chide,
And every Gem that's set torments the wishing
(Bride.

So much we pant after that Joy we miss,
And Hours seem Ages to depending Bliss.

With anxious Hopes the boding Fair beheld
Approaching Fate, preparing for the Field,
That leads to Majesty's encircling Arms,
Or leaves 'em to bemoan inferior Charms.

Arpasia pleads a Royal Train behind,
But *Myrrha* more the Beauty's of her Mind ;

Sygambria

Sygambris on her Face relies alone,
 And with that pow'rful Plea demands the Throne,
Ada, less confident of Charms, depends
 On *Chaldee* Rites, and thinks the Stars her Friends.
Mandana meditates a Lover's Wiles;
 The weaning Frowns that relish after-Smiles,
 The Blush of Art, the Languishings, the Sighs,
 And mild Reluctance conqu'ring as it flies.
 The dusky *Indian* softer Features vaunts,
 The *Syrian* Dame replies, She pure Complexion
 wants;
 The slender *Persian* by *Euphrates* born
 Beholds the grosser *Susan* Maid with Scorn:
 The *Bactrian* Beauties rustically move,
 Yet with a pleasing Rudeness awe to love.
 But all their Graces in *Hadassa* meet,
 And Vertue bids the *Jewess* be compleat.

So when the Will of God stretch'd out the
 (Earth,
 And Voice Omnipotent gave Nature Birth;

The

The Five-Days Miracle from Heav'n he view'd,
With Eye unerring, and pronounc'd it Good:
Then, in the Image of his Maker, Man,
Secure of Heav'n, if Just he wou'd remain,
He form'd, and bid him o'er the wide Creation
reign.

HIGH on a Throne of *Parian* Marble plac'd
Expecting sat the Monarch of the East.
Here he the Fate of distant Empires weighs,
War's with a Word, or bids *Beltona* cease.
Twelve Tygers, Work of *Babylon*, support
The grand Ascent, and savage seem to sport;
Such as in *Sogdia's* fertile Plains abide,
T' observe the tender Fawns, and wanton Kid.
Below a numerous Croud of *Mandrins* wait;
And feeble Eunuchs, Pageantry of State.
Around the Deeds of Heroes fam'd in Fight,
And rushing Chiefs surprize the doubtful Sight,
Sydonian Artifice. Here *Persia* Wars
With Foreign Foes, here bleeds with Civil Jars.

There

There a sad Tale the lively Walls afford,
 Of *Salem's* Temple spoil'd, dire Ravage of the
 (Sword!
 The Priest adoring at the Altar dies,
 By Hands unhallow'd, frightful Sacrifice!
 The City's ta'en, the Tow'rs of *Juda* burn,
 And captive Matrons in the Arras mourn.
 Expiring Infants on their Mothers call
 With Shrieks of Death, and from the Bosom fall;
 With Tresses torn Daughters of *Sion* grieve,
 Their Honour ravish'd, yet condemn'd to live;
 Old *Zedekiah* views his Children dead,
 By Cruelty from other Objects freed,
 But must for ever on th' Idea feed.

AND now the num'rous Fair in Order pass
 The nether Court, and on each other gaze.
 Thrice entring to the Royal Seat they bow,
 Thrice hail the Monarch with Obeysance low.

He,

He, rising, gracious smiles, and bends his Head,
And much of Majesty put off, thus said ;

“ Fair Rivals, who already share your Parts .

“ Of Rule Imperial, in my Subjects Hearts,

“ Behold his boasted Sway your Lord forgets,

“ And to the greater Monarch Love submits.

“ By Beauty vanquish'd he invites a Queen

“ To what an armed World had sought in vain.

“ Then with a Native Unconcern draw near,

“ And think, Love levelling, an Equal here.

So saying, he surveys with curious Eye

The beauteous Host, and walks Observant by.

Then, where Appearance first, or Fancy leads,

Accosts the Fair apart, and like a Lover pleads.

Nature, of Charms grown absolute aware,

(Mercy to Man) denies a perfect Fair,

Or lets them but like Miracles appear.

In these new kindling Loves each Glance betrays,

But still the Mind's unworthy of the Face :

And

And where prevailing Wit had Conquest made,
 By Damps of Countenance the Flame's allay'd.
 Here erring Modesty the Choice suspends,
 But more another's Gaiety offends.
 Had *Xanthe's* Eyes in form of *Phrine* shone,
 They'd gain'd together what they lose alone:
 Poor *Parifatis* wants *Semanthe's* Air,
 To reign supream, and She a Lip like Her.
 Young *Doris* better might expect a Year,
 Which sage *Arfinoe* wou'd kindly spare.
 Murm'ring they chide, and blame the long Debate,
 Fear Majesty unskill'd, or partial Hate.
 Where Victory seems hov'ring most, despise;
 And Smiles are Sacrilege where'er they miss.

WHEN lo, with Love determin'd in his Look,
 The Prince his Diadem imperial took;
 And, soft advancing to the tim'rous Maid,
 On *Hester's* Brow the Royal Burthen laid.
 Away the vanquish'd Dames in wild Disorder fled

HESTER: A POEM

31

So, Day confess'd Supream with purer Fire,
The starry Legions fly, and pale expire.

SAY, Beauty, thou superior Softness, say,
How Man to Tyrant Love thy Wiles betray;
How silent Fires can kindle at a Face,
How a whole Passion oft a Look conveys;
Whence Features unextended Mind affect:
What Charms from Sympathy the Fair protect;
If Souls some native Spark of Love contain:
Or are they only Passive in the Pain;
Pain that at once has Pow'r to Rack, and Please;
Distracting Joy, and rapturous Disease!

MEAN while rules *Haman* new-created Lord,
Hated of all, by many yet Ador'd;
Whom the fond Lure of Hope, or slavish Fear,
Tempt ev'n to Court him, whom they Curse in
(Pray'r.
Pride-sworn he overlooks the bended Knees
Of once his more than equal Enemies :

Scarce

Scarce on the proffer'd Service of his Friends

He deigns a Look, whose Memory offends.

With Honours forfeited the Monster grows,

And tramples on the Means by which he rose.

UNLIKE in every Motion of his Soul,
Religious *Mordecai* receives him, cool.

The cringing Sycophants he views untaught,

Nor feigns in Practice what he loaths in Thought.

While Crowds of prostrate Slaves their Homage
(do,

He, tho' a King commands it, scorns to Bow.

True to his Country's Good, no Arts he knows

To flatter whom his God pronounced their Foes :

True to his Lord, against his own Decree,

His Disobedience proves his Loyalty.

With Pledge of Life he dares the Secret tell,

In Form of Sanctity what Vices dwell ;

Whom straying Goodness cherishes unknown,

And how the blackest Crimes the Wreaths of Me-
(rit Crown.

His

His Breast such steady Resolution guides,
All uniform, and Shew of Evil chides.

As the Relief of Sleep by Night he sought,
His Senses fastned, and Himself forgot ;

Lo in the troubled Welkin Storms arise,
And Vapours combating obscure the Skies ;

The cleaving Earth her Chambers opes to Sight,
And forth two Dragons issue to the Fight.

All Nations at the mighty Noise prepare,
To smite the Remnant that *Jehovah* fear.

Then Anguish and Affliction fierce begin,
And Pray'r and Lamentation fill the Scene.

WHEN a live limpid Rill, too small for Name,
With sudden Waves a sounding Flood became :

The Sun, and Light to Noon superior shone,
And all th' embattel'd Multitudes were gone.

HE woke ; and still the Imag'ry was plain,
And Sleep but with the Vision comes again.

Gladly the latent Meaning wou'd he know,
 If Dreams portend; which sure they seem to do,
 Most he inclines to Hope, yet Fears by-Fits;
 If Good he Blesses, and if Bad submits.

COURAGE is still a calm composing Good,
 By Heav'n to none but Souls serene allow'd.
 Error in both Extreems alike is near,
 A brutish want of Thought, and meager Fear
 In a mild Climate the happy Temper lies
 And seeks not Danger, not from Duty flies.

SOON eyes him *Haman* jealous of Respect,
 And glad Observers whisper the Neglect.
 The fretting Choler his Intestines tears,
 And gath'ring Storms his fallen Forehead wears.
 Oft, on the Life of *Mordecai* intent,
 His Pride forbids the Blow his Malice meant.
 Then on his Slaves his boiling Passions range,
 But artless Death's too limited Revenge;

The

The trodden Paths of Fate as mean he leaves,
And how the Terror to improve conceives.

As motly Son of Leopardess, in Lawn
Of *Parthian* Realms that long had hungry gone,
The Shepherd occupy'd, beholds a while
The browsing Flocks, and meditates of Spoil;
How best the sav'ry Pillage he may reap,
And lashes with his Train before the Leap;
Quakes sinewy with Joy, and prostrate slides,
Fond Tyrant, and his rav'nous Visage hides:
Then with the Speed of Lightning springs his Way,
And rushes unrelenting on the Prey:

So *Haman* fluctuating fans his Rage,
When thus his Other-self advises sage;
" No more *Zerese* let her Lord embrace,
" No more the Mother of a Tenfold Race;
" May yawning Earth my lab'ring Eyelids close,
" Or Blast of Heav'n the Tie of Nature loose;

- " May Plagues for whole Eternity laid up
 " Show'r down at once, and doting *Mithra* stop:
 " When a mean *Israelite* shall *Haman* brave,
 " And He that rules his Prince regard a Slave.
 " Perish the Wretch that dares obstruct thy Way,
 " Food for the Fowls of Heav'n, or *Panther's* Prey!
 " The *Jewish* Runagate already bleeds.

She said ; and paus'd a while, and then proceeds ;

- " But simple Death when injur'd Honour sues,
 " Is but to toy with Vengeance, we shou'd use :
 " Ten Thousand Victims shall his Crime atone,
 " The scatter'd Nation expiate for one,
 " And glut with dear Revenge the Darling of
 (the Throne.

To whom th' *Amalekite* with calmer look,
 But Cruelty resolv'd, returning spoke ;

- " WIFE of my Bosom, fairest, happiest Choice,
 " Thy Face is Heav'n, and Oracle thy Voice !
 " The

" The Gods thy Noblest Vengeance have instill'd,

" Which quick as Will of Heav'n shall be fulfill'd.

" By Shrine of *Ashtaroth*, by ev'ry Star,

" By Bliss above, and Tortures of Despair ;

" This Day, if Entrails fought with skilful Eye

" Reek promising, the Fate of *Israel's* nigh.

S o he ; and both Success embracing pray,

As fated Basilisks encircled play.

A N D now, all Rites perform'd, glad Omens
(rise

Prefage of Luck, *Chaldean* Fallacies.

Strait *Haman* fearless seeks the Royal Ear,

His Tragedy advancing from afar.

" W H E R E ' E R thy Standards stretch their Silken
(Wings

" Great *Artaxerxes* Praise the Subject sings.

" By Will thou reign'st, and willing we obey ;

" Happy if All of Us were worthy Thee !

- “ A wandring Race thy Clemency deceive
“ With godly Sloth, and unregarded live ;
“ Thy Reign they slander, moody under Ease,
“ Yet reap the Fatness of the Land in Peace.
“ Of future Rule, and Oracles they boast,
“ And Times that shall restore a Scepter lost :
“ Fond Dreams, and darker Prophecies they tell,
“ Ready on all Occasions to rebel.
“ Their Manners different, their Rites from ours,
“ Nor own the Deities the World adores :
“ To Death all Worship of the Gods deny,
“ And call our Mysteries Idolatry.
“ A superstitious Sect, from Syria sprung,
“ Of *Persian* Arms th’ inglorious Object long ;
“ Stubborn of Old, and by their own Record,
“ Driv’n out of *Egypt* by their injur’d Lord ;
“ The Vassal *Jews* if Majesty has heard
“ The Servile Name, unmeriting Regard.
“ These our Dread *Sultan*’s Life and Honour ask ;
“ To rid the Land be mine th’ ungrateful Task.
“ Ten

" Ten Thousand Talents, all that *Haman* has,
 " (And all the Product of thy Bounty was)
 " To haste the Work he freely will defray,
 " Or rather to thy Treasuries repay.

When, off his Hand the fatal Signet drawn,
 Th' unwary Prince in Smiles pronounc'd it done:

" Take this, said he; and, as he gave it him,
 " In *Persian* Realms be next my self Supream;
 " Untold the Talents, thine the Race shall be,
 " And who wou'd honour Us, must honour Thee,

Swift as a scented Vultur wings on high,
 Pale Pursuivants of Death from *Susa* fly:
 Express (for *Hamán* pens) their Orders are,
 Nor Sex, nor Age, nor Innocence to spare.
 The Maid, the Matron, undistinguish'd fall,
 The Sire and Race at once, one Funeral
 From Bank of *Ganges*, to the bounding Sands
 Of *Ethiopia* reach the wide Commands,

If kindling Pity but in Look revive, *And T he T* "
 He dies himself that dares but Life to give. *(A)* "
 His Lord to Wine and Mirth the Fav'rite takes, "
 Ere Memory returns, and Thought awakes. *O* "

UNHAPPY Potentates, whom Distance ties
 To Hear with others Ears, and See with other's
 (Eyes !
 Whom naked Truth must ne'er approach alone,
 But in a Dress and Aspect not her own !
 Whom Fears or Flatteries of Fav'rites doom
 To live eternal Strangers still at Home !
 The Great their Councils with the Slave must share,
 While Facts the Stamp of the Relater bear,
 Still as the *Minion's* View the Turn shall give,
 'Tis mild to rack, or savage to relieve.
 Guilt, as the Cause requires, may needful grow,
 And Vertue's self is but at Seasons so.
 While his aspiring Wishes gain their Height,
 The flatter'd Prince is ever in the Right.

MEAN while low'rs Heav'n as conscious of the
(Deed,

And pregnant Clouds their treasur'd Waters shed ;

Thick Rain, and forked Fires, at once descend,

And hollow Murmurs seem the Sky to rend :

Such Rivers spilt o'erbear the burthen'd Soil,

As *Susa's* Situation were on *Nile*.

UNBID th' unwelcome Rumour gains apace,

And Few approve what All consent to praise.

With Arms acrofs before the Palace stalks

Loft *Mordecai*, and much of Heav'n he talks.

To Pray'r devote, all Sustenance declines,

With Ashes on his Head, and Sackcloth on his
(Loins.

THEIR Hands in Anguish wrung, and Rai-
(ments rent,

In solitary Ways his Kin lament.

With briny Kiss the shiv'ring Nurse bedews

Her tender Boys, that now the Breast refuse.

The

The Ag'd their little Wrong in Peace attend,
 But rev'rend Tears upon their Offspring spend.
 Here at the News a Matron feels within
 Ill-tim'd Efforts of Life, and Throws begin;
 Th' imperfect Being in its Prison strives,
 And seems to shrink at Death that hardly lives.
 Here Two, in sacred Bonds of Friendship One,
 Fear for each other's Fate, and slight their own;
 Yet pleas'd, that neither shall be left alone.

To die is Launching in some misty Main,
 No Tables do describe, or Shores contain,
 Whence none the Strand they quitted once can
 (can reach,
 The Length, the Windings of the Way to teach.
 A Voyage our Fore-fathers all have gone,
 Of Man the most frequented and unknown.

THE mournful Tydings as *Hadassa* hear'd,
 Her Hands, addressing Providence, she rear'd;

Best

Best Auspice. Thrice her Orisons began ;
 Thrice staggering Nature fail'd, and backward ran.
 Wild Images swim incoherent round,
 And Murmurs fashion'd in the Fancy sound.
 All pale upon her Cheek the Roses die,
 Nor flashes more the Lightning of her Eye.
 A sickly Purple stagnates in her Veins,
 And Life but in a faltering Pulse remains.
 In chilling Dews the vital Flame decays,
 And Death's the reigning Feature of her Face.
 The Soul with Agonies the Conflict bears,
 And from its Mansion to depart prepares.

So, hov'ring o'er the Temples sacred Roof,
 The Parent Pidgeon pays maternal Love,
 When near she views her Sons on Altar laid,
 And of the Knife, and of the Flames afraid ;
 In pious Plaint on absent Mate she calls,
 And to the Ground with flacken'd Pinions falls.

AGHAST

AGHAST the sinking Queen her Maids sustain,
 And court coy Life with Cordials back again.
 First Object Heav'n her slumb'ring Sight relieves;
 To Heav'n the Firstlings of her Lips she gives.

" O THOU WHO ART! whose Will deter-
 (mines Fate,

" Omnipotent to Save, as to Create!

" On Me, thine Handmaid, look with Mercy
 (down,

" And mild thine Heritage, returning, own.

" Remember now thy plighted Troth of Old,

" Those healing Mysteries to come foretold,

" Late Rule, a Residue thy Praise to sing,

" And *SHILO*, sacred Name, from Us to spring.

" LOST in Confusion we recount our Sins;

" The loathsome View the Memory declines.

" Unweary'd Wickedness, and Grace abus'd,

" Thy Mercies scorn'd, and chaf'ning Calls refus'd,

" Have

HESTER: A POEM. 45

" Have brought down Vengeance on our Guilty
(Head,

" And justly rampant Freedom is with Chains re-
(pay'd.

" Thence wail we *Juda* in a foreign Land ;

" Thence strengthens *Haman*, Scourge of thine,
(his Hand.

" YET, Lord, thy Pity suffer us to seek,

" And let our Punishment for Pardon speak!

" Thou mourn'st thy Character in Man deprav'd,

" And joy'st in Heav'n to meet a Sinner sav'd.

" WITH what Indifference I brook this Crown;

" How slight the gawdy Trifles of a Throne ;

" How long my Choice averse, at last obey'd ;

" From thy All-seeing Justice is not hid.

" Nor have I, fond or fearful of my State,

" Or at their Altars bow'd, or at their Tables eat.

" Ev'n now the Foes impatient wait our Fall,

" And on *Jehovah* blasphemously call.

" Where's

"Where's now their Hebrew God, each Heathen
(cries,

"His chosen Sons to ours a Sacrifice?

"Then let our Sins thy Clemency declare,

"And for thy Glorious Name thy People spare!

"None fail of Succours that on Thee rely,

"In Pow'r to overcome, or Strength to die.



HESTER.

POEM.

BOOK III.

***** N Sleep supine the Sons of Persia lay,
***** I Enjoying gentle Ease deny'd to Day.
***** The Slave at Liberty forgets his Cares,
And more the Blessing than his Master shares.
Alone the Prince with Lids unfolded lies,
His anxious Breast the fickle Phantom flies.

Of

Off with unbended Mind he Slumber feigns,
Provokes the drowsy Pow'r, and courts his Chains:
Still some officious Thoughts their Duty press,
And rouse him just compos'd to balmy Bliss.
When, sick of the Delays of tardy Time,
Who loiters most when most we call on him;
To rid the Night, he rais'd his awful Head,
And bid the Records of his Reign be read.
Here, what in Wars with vanquish'd *Mede* befell,
Here Policies of Peace, the Annals tell,
How *Indian* Spoils the Tow'rs of *Susa* grac'd,
And how the *Abissinian* Conflict ceas'd.
At home, what Merit crown'd, or Vice deterr'd,
What Treason crush'd, or Loyalty preferr'd.
Where budding Hopes might future Worth disclose,
Where Flattery the Face of Duty shews.
And now the much remember'd Year begins,
Where Loyal *Mordecai* in Story shines;

When The

When the false Eunuchs of the Court, in vain,
Their impious Hands in sacred Blood would stain.

The haughty Traytor's Slave, a faithful Jew,
(Nought binds the Bad, and Vertue will be true)
Unheeded the foul Stratagem o'erhear'd,
And to the Patriot Mordecai declar'd;

Not long the Plot was from *Hadassa* hid,
The Treason open'd, and the Rebels dy'd.

Too well were *Bithana* and *Tereb* known,
Too well the tottering Danger of the Crown;

" But what for Services so good, so great,
(The Monarch'd cry'd) " What Honours load
(him yet,

" Stay of our Throne, and Guardian of the State?

But none consulted Chronicles afford,

No Marks of Grace his Subject's Breasts record;

His native Recompence alone allow'd,

The silent Satisfaction of the Good.

When nowth' *Amalekite*, with Dawn of Day,
The Presence sought, and heard his Master say;
E " M r

- " My Haman, Welcome ever as the Light,
 " My lab'ring Breast grows easy at thy Sight.
 " This Night my Thoughts within themselves
 (have strove,
 " And Merits unrepay'd my Soul reprove.
 " There treads my Courts to whom a Monarch
 (ows;
 " The Debt beneath my slumb'ring Bounty grows.
 " Princes, unmindful of the Laws they give,
 " More than their Subjects do themselves deceive:
 " And Ties of Gratitude are strongest still,
 " Where Heav'n has left unlimited the Will.
 " Say then, my Oracle, what Glories shall,
 " On Brow of him I deign to favour, fall?

THRO' false Perspective of Ambition shewn,
 The Face seem'd his, the Character his own.
 He felt each Feature of the Man within,
 But that in Praise the Prince had scanty been.
 So blest an Opportunity as This,
 Shall be return'd the Gods in Sacrifice.

Then

Then wide as Air, by Range of Fancy led,
He stretch'd the Faculty of Wish, and said:

" THE Slave, thus over-happy in thy Care,
" May he the Crown, and Robes Imperial wear ;
" And thus array'd thy Royal Steed bestride,
" And thro' the *Susan* Streets in Triumph ride :
" Then may some Prince, with thy Distinction
 (grac'd,
" With Words like these before the Pageant haste ;
" *So fares the Man by Majesty belov'd ;*
" *Thus honour'd is the Subject of his Lord approv'd.*

He spake; and long the fleeting Moment
 (thought,
'Till thus his dire Mistake too early taught.

" THEN *Mordecai* the faithful Stranger find ;
" (The nether Chambers are his Charge assign'd)
" On him see Thou the Triumph acted all ;
" No Circumstance of what thou said'st shall fall.

A THOUSAND Harpys on the Favorite prey'd,
But calm in Visage he the King obey'd.

As when some Tyger, laden from the Chase,
Makes home, with Booty that retards her Pace;
Now near the Thicket where her Offspring lye,

She winds the Shepherd and his Mastiffs nigh:

The reeking Kid she drops indignant down,

And to her Feet, and Safety looks alone;

Fain on the Foe some rough Returns wou'd make,

And as she scowls along the Lawns, grins back;

But Fear forbids what Rage wou'd undertake.

Now Haman and his boding Comfort share

The Load of Grief too big for One to bear.

Too mean was Mordakai, Mankind he curst,

And, like a Statesman true, his Monarch first.

Thro' Heav'n his Blasphemies the Monster deals,

Then calls a Thousand Plagues to those he feels.

“ But

" But here, rav'd he, my wishes are in vain,
 " On One already too debas'd for Stain!
 " By Scheme of Thine thy Rival reigns alone,
 " Forc'd from his Fetters to pollute a Crown.
 " The foul Remembrance in my Bosom grows,
 " Each Thought is Rack, and Fire within me
 (glows,
 " To Brink of Heav'n advanc'd, alone to hear
 " My self refus'd, and see a Rival there!
 " And then the Wretch of Glory tasteless too,
 " Passive in Joy, cou'd only undergo;
 " Enduring Happiness unmov'd he sat,
 " While *Haman* was the Footstool of his State.

With that, a Gust of Passion burst its way;
 More he had said, had less been still to say.
 In vain his Confidents their Arts apply,
 Sooth or correct, encourage or decry:
 But more his Malady their Maxims move,
 Too tender for the Touch, tho' that of Love.

PASSION is but a Civil War within,
 Where Parties disoblig'd the Breach begin.
 Imperial Reason urges Peace in vain ;
 Each Faction is Supreme, and all wou'd Reign.
 Tor'ring upon its Base the Fabrick shakes,
 Against it self the shatter'd Vessel breaks.

How nice is Honour, how unguarded still,
 How lightly wounded, and how hard to heal !
 How chaste the Sighs, the Blushes of a Maid,
 Fearless abroad she's yet at home afraid !
 Tho' feign'd the Vertue, the Concern's the same ;
 Less Trouble in the Substance than the Name.

HERE Zereph, more compos'd, her Talent plies,
 And calmer Cure of balmy Counsel tries.

" AWAKE, my Lord, from Rage Lethargick
 (wake ;
 " Banish the Brute, and summon Haman back !

" No

- " No longer thus thy self tormenting mourn,
 " But on thine Enemies thine Anger turn.
 " Less Zeal, and Conduct more, had long e'er this
 " Regain'd what envious Heav'n had doom'd to
 (miss.
 " Complaint's the Refuge of a scanty Soul,
 " May sometimes skin the Wound, but ne'er make
 (whole.
 " Tho' Pain the Patient for a Time beguile,
 " A lurking Ulcer but improves the while.
 " Ill suits such Management the Rules you gave,
 " To dwell upon the Sore, and fly the Salve.
 " As well the Mariner, by Phrensy led,
 " In Storms for Negligence may Danger plead :
 " As well the Chief, when Fate of Empire's nigh,
 " Indulge his Rebel Troops in Mutiny.
 " Now too (but Passion in the Prospect stands)
 " The Harvest of Revenge requires our Hands.
 " This Moon but wear in wonted Temper o'er,
 " Not *Mordecai*, nor His shall hurt Thee more.

As from a Trance reviving, Human rose,
 The Cordial own'd, and now himself he knows.
 Each wandring Faculty resum'd its Charge;
 Again confess'd the Statesman throne at large.
 And now in haste for Court his Orders are;
 A num'rous Host of cringing Slaves prepare.
 The moveable Confinement of the Great;
 Such gay Perplexities attend on State.

But ere they go (for Guilt's inquisitive)
 The Host of Heav'n must their Opinion give.

THE Sorc'ers strait their mystic Engins raise,
 On Skies they pore, on human Entrails gaze.
 Shrill Voices from below the Pavement rend;
 In Forms obscene the dusky Flames ascend.
 Strange Odours from the brais'd Oment rise,
 And flow consumes the lingring Sacrifice.
 Their Tables trembled, and their Altar bow'd,
 The frozen Wines scarce from the Condy flow'd.

Malign

HESTER: A POEM

37

Malign each Mystery the *Magi* mourn,
No kind Contingencies their Rites adorn.

ZERESA too her smother'd Fear reveals,
And of a Damp she felt desponding tells;
Of Images ill suited as she slept,
And how unbidden Tears she waking wept;
How *Mordecai* was Eccho'd in her Ear,
As she repos'd at Noon, and none were near.

But what the Favourite might most controul,
Most chill the sparkling Ardor of his Soul:
An ancient Prophecy the Men relate,
Of dim Futurity, and distant Fate;
"That late the Seed of *Israel* shou'd prevail,
"And Name of *Amalek* before them fail.

Not *Haman* their ambiguous Story shook;
But as his Friends, his Wife, dissuading spoke,
He resolute from their Entreaties broke.

So

So Rebel *Absalom*, profanely mad,
 Flies wholesom Counsel, and pursues the bad.
 Abandon'd Heav'n at length the Guilty leaves,
 And to the Bent of his own Wishes gives.
 His Cunning now advancing Vengeance speeds;
 Lost if he fails, and curst if he succeeds.

WHENCE art Thou, Magick, thus admir'd be-
 Art thou Delusion all, and empty Shew;
 Thy Subject Folly, and thy Motive Gain,
 To sink the Purse, and elevate the Brain?
 Or is the Sire of Falsities allow'd
 Sometimes, for Ends (surpassing Reason) good,
 His guilty Votaries dark Truths to teach,
 To lure abandon'd Wretches to his Reach?

HENCE Search of what indulgent Heav'n's
 That cheats our Understanding, or our Eye;
 And whether true or false is fatal Fallacy.

WHIL

WHILE *Haman* his infernal Force surveys,
And seeks of Embryo Time the hidden Face;

Succeeding Ill to antedate within,
In Waste of Guilt, and Lavishment of Sin;

The pious *Hebrew* on his Maker calls;
Then from his Lips this weighty Message falls.

"HASTE, *Hatach*, haste where *Hester* mourns
(the Day,
And thus from *Mordecai* commanding say.

"IN vain the Coldness of the King you plead,
And that this Moon he flies thy vacant Bed;

"In vain the Danger, and the Law you break,
That none Uncall'd the Royal Presence seek;

"Think not the Diadem that loads thy Brow
Will screen its Wearer from the common Blow.

"If you, neglectful of a Parent's Part,
Thro' Fear the Post of Providence desert;

"The Means of Safety unattempted leave,
And naked Innocence to Fury give;

"Heav'n

" Heav'n will some saving Miracle create,

" And mark Thee and thy Father's House for
(Fate

" AND who the Paths of Providence can know,

" So deep, so dark, and so unbeaten too ?

" No Footsteps lie, no Pressure on the Place,

" So light the Tread, so different the Pace,

" By ways unpromising it leads us on,

" And Joys are nearest oft, when Hopes are gone,

" Perhaps for such complexion'd Days as these,

" She call'd thy Youth to fatal Dignities.

" Than wisest her Designs can ne'er be less,

" To prove or punish us, to blame or bless ;

" Sure their Event, unerring the Success.

" WHERE Heav'n on Man superior Gifts be-
(flows,

" Still with the Benefit the Duty grows.

" So Sov'reignty and Rule extended far,

" In which Men most their Maker's Image bear,

" Such

HESTER: A POEM

61

"Such Royal Subjects but oblige anew,

"To practise with his Pow'r His Goodness too."

STRAIT to the Queen the trusty Vassal flies,
And speaks the Charge he prefac'd with his Eyes.

SHE heard attentive; thought a while; then
(said;

"Go tell him Heav'n and He shall be obey'd.

"Twere Sacrilege to treasure for a few,

"A Life to Publick Peace or Safety due.

"With Pray'r the Monarch on his Throne I'll
(move,

"Or for my People fall a Sacrifice of Love.

"But first, that Providence the Work may
(guide,

"And smile in teeming Blessings on our side,

"May all my Countrymen, my Kith in Woe;

"Allay'd in Family and Fortune to,

"Who here in *Susa* servile Bondage brook;

"And for the Mystry *Messiah* look;

"Three

" Three Days their Hearts before *Jehovah* rend ;

" To his Almighty Care the Cause Commend.

" And, as their pointed Pray'rs shall wing the Sky,

" In some ascending Wish remember me !

" So shall the NAMELESS POW'r, with equal
(Eye,

" Or bless us still with Life, or crown us if we
(die.

THRICE o'er the Waste of Heav'n bright Mi-
(thra rode,

Thrice parch'd the russet Glebe, and sought the
(Flood

The Lord of Hosts his suppliant Race implor'd,

And Pray'r engag'd warm Conflict with the Sword

Od'rous the Fumes of Oral Incense rise

In mounting Spires, and sanctify the Skies.

AND now the Day in radiant Blushes breaks,

That anxious *Hester* to her Charge awakes.

Soft airy Clouds the dimpled Azure hide,

And fleeting Landships in the Fluid ride.

Abroad

Abroad the feather'd Quire with Musick stray,
 And spicy Sweets on wafting Breezes play;
 Each Aspine has its Picture on the Plain,
 Surveys its lengthen'd Limbs, and massy Mein;
 While Nature smiles in youthful Charms again.
 Her Weeds of Woe the *Sultaneſs* forſakes,
 And Robes of Maſteſty engaging takes.
 Where Tears had gone diffuſive Unguents ſpread,
 And Purple veils the Wounds by Sackcloth made.
 None more adorn'd the Courts of *Suſa* trode,
 Or leſs to recommending Veſture ow'd.

WHEN Goodneſs with the Voice of Beauty
 (pleads,
 More than a Marble Breſt a Tyrant needs.
 Tho' weak be the Defence, a Crime the Cauſe,
 The guiltleſs Face can beautifie the Flaws.
 The Fair our Inclination ſtill prevent,
 And ſain the ſtrugling Judgment wou'd aſſent.
 The Stamp of Truth does on their Accent dwell,
 Or Beauty knows to counterfeit too well.

Y E T

YET not on Forces of her own relies
 The pious Queen, but to her Maker flies
 Of human Pow'r the Fallacy she knew,
 Weak to the Grasp, tho' gaudy to the View,
 Heav'n was the Confident of all her Care,
 And thus the last Preparative was Pray'r.

" GREAT Monarch of the World, whom
 Kings obey,

" While meanest Vassals are allow'd to pray,
 " With noble Warmth inspire my tim'rous Breast,
 " And Words in thy all-wise appointing blest,
 " The Cause of Innocence oppress'd to plead,
 " If Pride shall reign, or sacred Vertue bleed!
 " Tho' weak the Instrument, a Sinner too,
 " The Cause is Thine, and our Dependance Thou.
 " Of Old Thy Choice the Few and Simple were,
 " When We amidst the Nations had thy Care.
 " Too num'rous for Thy War was Gideon's Host;
 " A Few th' Almighty manifested most.

" TIS

HESTER: A POEM.

65

" 'Tis no fond Passion that extorts my Cry ;

" With Joy, might *Juda* live, wou'd *Hester* die!

" But, Lord, if so thy Providence Decree,

" Unmeet for Mercies if thy People be ;

" Yet spare a Wretch that sinn'd of Charity.

With that a Form refulgent shook the Place,

Serene his Look, Ineffable his Grace.

A Scarfe, that gently flow'd around his Wasse,

Retain'd a Tincture of the Skies it past.

A Silver Show'r of Hair his Shoulders hid,

And waving loose the wanton Breezes chid.

His Robe was such as Day departing leaves,

When Night in Western Clouds her Summons gives

Gay Lightnings from his Eyes auspicious flew,

And Terrors far delightful on his Brow.

All else was Ecstasy, too big for Sense,

The fairest Work of vast Omnipotence.

F

SCARCE

SCARCE on the dazzling Sight might *Hester*,
 (look,
 Almost their Course the Streams of Life forsook;
 When thus the Minister of Glory spoke.

"Who fear *Jezebel* have none else to fear;
 "Himself observes their Sighs, and yields to
 (Pray'r.
 "Of Sinners lost much Sacred Stories tell,
 "But never that forsaken Vertue fell.
 "Let Fate of *Rachel's* Son thy Soul employ;
 "Be that thy Pledge of yet unfeatur'd Joy!
 "(Such great Commands Almighty Goodness gave)
 "And with his Innocence his Fortune have!

THIS said, the lovely-dreadful Voice gave o'er,
 And Sight cou'd reach the fleeting Form no more.
 Much *Hester* the stupend'ous Message mov'd;
 In trembling Raptures she ador'd and lov'd.

HESTER: A POEM

89

New Charms darning Gratitude displays;
To bount'ous Heav'n the rears a cheerful Face;
Then best Acknowledgement Obedience pays.

HER Twins unfledg'd, the galleys Turtle so,
If near her leavy Lodge some Lyon go,
With bristled Plumes to face the Fox prepared,
And scarce the Royal Savage she forbears
Fear, and unguarded Innocence, supply
What Custom, Nature, and the Sex deny.
No Thoughts of Danger, or of Safety move,
But all the Passions are absorb't in Love.

STEAD on his awful Throne the Sophi sat,
Dispensing Laws, unchangeable as Fate.
His knitting Brows an angry Welcome bid;
No Attributes of Royalty were hid:
A Scepter fill'd his Hand, and near Access deny'd.

BUT when the Fair advancing prostrate kneel'd,
A kindling Care his softer Look reveal'd;

68 **HESTER: A POEM.**

All melting in his Breast Affection glow'd
Mild from his Royal Seat the Monarch bow'd :
Her tender Arms to raise the Queen he took,
And fondly to the trembling Beauty spoke.

“ M Y *Hester*, fear no more, thy Lord still loves,
“ And thy Petition yet unheard approves,
“ The silent Wishes of thy Soul reveal,
“ And Half my wide Dominion waits thy Will.

THE N she ; “ If Majesty can stoop to hear,
“ And crown his Handmaid's Wishes with his Ear ;
“ She means an humble Banquet to provide,
“ In the cool Grot where *Ulai* rows his Tide:
“ There may my Lord and *Haman* softly waste
“ An Evening Hour, some *Indian* Wines to Taste,
“ And *Hester* will unload the Burthen of her
(Breast.)

A SMILE his Approbation first prevents,
Then in a kind Expression he consents.

Strait

Straight thro' the Court Imperial Orders run,
To haste the Friend, the Partner of his Crown.

Less grateful does the Day debating dawn
In Icy Climes, where Winter reigns alone;
Less welcome to the wearied Pilot rise,
The Lineaments of Land, in angry Skies;
Than what the Fav'rites Breast must swell to bear,
With *Hester* at a Banquet bid to share.

Scarce the whole Joy he can admit with Ease,
But Faith soon widens when its Objects please.
His artful Cunning as the Cause he blest,
With Sparkles in his Eyes, and Beatings in his
(Breast.

Too fix'd he seem'd for Policy to blast;
The Stamp of Royal Favour now was past.
His slow Enjoyment of the Bliss he chides,
When Envy intervening thus forbids;
" But I amidst a Thousand Plenties pine,
" Tho' Glory courts me, and a Monarch's mine!
" Tho'

" Tho' but the Pageantry of Pow'r he bears;
 " Nor *Hester* his indulgent Weakness spares;
 " While *Mordecai* accurst the Court frequents,
 " My Pleasures but perplex, and Joy torments,
 " His haunting Image still before me flies,
 " And sow'rs the Satisfactions as they rise.

O! Thoughts like these distracting Fancy fed,
 'Till Time admonish'd him the Banquet stay'd.

AND now the Vine in Golden Goblets bleeds,
 When *Hester* thus the Cause of *Israel* pleads;

" HAD *Hester*, and her Race been doom'd alone,
 " Beneath eternal Servitude to grone,
 " (Tho' nought cou'd less thy sullied Reign adorn)
 " Our Fate had been with Pray'r and Patience born:
 " But now 'tis Life I ask, and You must give,
 " That *Hester* and her Progeny may live;
 " If *Hester* e're was grateful in thy Sight,
 " If e're the Name you mention'd with Delight!

" We

HESTER: A POEM

71

" We fall a Sacrifice to boundless Hare,

" And Deaths in every Form their Harvest wait,

THE Monarch's Soul was Fury and Surprise,
And shot a livid Tempest from his Eyes.

" And does a Monster so polluted live?

" Not Fate from Vengeance shall the Slave re-
(prive!

" To his first Nothing I'll the Wretch restore;

" By all the Gods this Moment he's no more!

So He; She only mild, " Then Haman here,

" Remorseless Haman is the Foe we fear.

WITH that the startled Prince the Garden
(sought;

The Covert was too narrow for his Thought.

Contending Passions in his Bosom war,

Justice and Love, to Punish and to Spare.

Soon Sentence had allay'd the warm Dispute,

In ought but Haman's Sin, or Hester's Suit.

Shou'd

Shou'd injur'd Innocence appeal in vain,
 And partial Inclination Justice stain!
 And yet Reluctance in his Bowels pleads,
 The Patron suffers; while the Fav'rite bleeds.
 Something to one so near himself was due;
 But then the Great are greatest Sinners too.

On Isthmus of Suspense the Guilty lives:
 The Monarch sentences, the Friend reprieves.

So when collected Vapours hang the Sky,
 And sable Frowns portend Disaster nigh;
 The flutt'ring Winds the scummy Concave coast,
 Shift all Extreams, and seem in Changing lost:
 Doubtful those Factions in their airy Realm
 To bear in Billows down, or scatter into Calm.

MEAN while Confusions on the Courtier seize,
 His Temper fails him, and his Fears increase.
 Imploring Life to *Hester's* Feet he flies,
 And with a fawning Penitence applies.

Th'

Th' Accuser now the Victim is become,
 And waits from Innocence Condemn'd his Doom.
 In vain he seeks the Refuges of Art,
 His Limbs and Eloquence at once desert :
 He sinks, he falters, and his Words rebel ;
 And on the Royal Bed he fainting fell.

AND now the King returns with calmer Air;
 Compassion seems the Mixture most to share.

But when with jealous Aspect he surveys
 The Queen, the Bed, the Posture, and the
 (Place :

“ And will he force her too before my Face !
 No more the Monarch. Strait an Eunuch hastes,
 And o'er the Guilty Face a Cov'ring casts.
 To Death's chill Gripe his ghastly Charge conveys,
 Where Hopes are all no more, and Fear must cease.
 Most to depart without Revenge he grieves,
 As his reluctant Soul the Body leaves.

FINIS.

Th' Accuser now the Victim is become,
 And waits from Innocence Condemn'd his Doom.
 In vain he seeks the Refuge of Air,
 His Limbs and Eloquence at once desert;
 He sinks, he faints, and his Words rebel;
 And on the Royal Bed he flinging fell.
 And now the King returns with calmer Air;
 Companion being the Mixture most to share.
 But when with jealous Ape he surveys
 The Queen, the Bed, the Posture, and the
 (Place)
 And will be force her too before my Face!
 No more the Monarch snarls an Innocent's
 And o'er the Guilty Face a Gowning casts.
 To Death's chill Gripe his ghastly Charge conveys,
 Where Hopes are all **MA 64 81** **MA 64 81** **MA 64 81**
 Most to depart without Revenge he grieves,
 As his reluctant Soul the Body leaves.

F I N I S